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NEGRO TALES FROM GEORGIA

[THE following tales were collected by Mrs. E. M. Backus and by Mrs. Ethel Hatton Leitner at Grovetown, Columbia County, Georgia. Those collected by Mrs. Backus are signed E. M. B.; those collected by Mrs. Leitner, E. H. L. — Ed.]

I. WHEN BRER RABBIT SAW BRER DOG'S MOUTH SO BRER DOG CAN WHISTLE

In the ole times, when Brer Dog a roaming through the woods, he come up with Brer Rabbit, Brer Dog do. Brer Rabbit he set on the sand just a-whistling, and a-picking of the banjo.

Now, in them times Brer Rabbit was a master-hand with the banjo. These yer hard times 'pears like Brer Rabbit done forget how to whistle, and you don' hear him pick the banjo no more; but in the ole times Brer Rabbit he whistle, and frolic, and frolic and whistle, from morning twell night.

Well, Brer Dog he mighty envious of Brer Rabbit, 'case Brer Dog he can't whistle, and he can't sing, Brer Dog can't. Brer Dog he think he give anything in reason if he could whistle like Brer Rabbit, so Brer Dog he beg Brer Rabbit to learn hisself to whistle.

Now, Brer Dog he called the most reliable man in the county; and he have some standing, Brer Dog do; and he have right smart of sense, Brer Dog have; but bless you, Sah, Brer Dog he can't conjure 'longside that Ole Brer Rabbit, that he can't.

Well, when Brer Dog beg Brer Rabbit will he learn hisself to whistle, Brer Rabbit he say, "Brer Dog, your mouth ain' shape for whistling." Brer Rabbit he say, "Name of goodness, Brer Dog, how come you studying 'bout whistling with that mouth? Now, Brer Dog, you just watch my mouth and try yourself;" and Brer Rabbit he just corner up his mouth and whistle to beat all.

Brer Dog he try his best to corner up his mouth like Brer Rabbit; but he can't do it, Brer Dog can't. But the more Brer Dog watch Brer Rabbit whistle, the more envious Brer Dog get to whistle hisself.

Now, Brer Dog he know how Brer Rabbit are a doctor; so Brer Dog he ax Brer Rabbit can he fix his mouth so he can whistle?

Brer Rabbit, he 'low as how he might fix Brer Dog's mouth so he can whistle just tolerable, but Brer Rabbit he 'low how he have to saw the corners of Brer Dog's mouth right smart; and he 'low, Brer Rabbit do, how "it be mighty worrisky for Brer Dog."

Now, Brer Dog, he that envious to whistle like Brer Rabbit, Brer Dog he 'clare he let Brer Rabbit saw his mouth.

Brer Rabbit he say as how he don' want deceive Brer Dog; and he say, Brer Rabbit do, as how he ain' gwine promise to make Brer Dog whistle more same as hisself, but he say he "make Brer Dog whistle tolerable."

So Brer Rabbit he get his saw, and he saw a slit in the corners Brer Dog's mouth. It nateraly just nigh 'bout kill Ole Brer Dog; but Brer Dog he are a thorough-gwine man, and what Brer Dog say he gwine do, he gwine do, he sure is.

So Brer Dog he just hold hisself together, and let Brer Rabbit saw his mouth.

Now, Brer Rabbit he know in his own mind Brer Dog ain' gwine whistle sure 'nough, but Brer Rabbit he don' know just what Brer Dog gwine say; so when Brer Rabbit get through a-sawing of Brer Dog's mouth, Brer Rabbit he say, "Now try if you can whistle!" Brer Dog he open his mouth, and he try to whistle; and he say, "Bow, wow, wow!" Brer Dog do say that for a fact.

Well, when Brer Rabbit hear Brer Dog whistle that yer way, Brer Rabbit he that scared he just turn and fly for home; but Brer Dog he that mad, when he hears hisself whistle that yer way, he say he gwine finish Ole Brer Rabbit: so Brer Dog he put out after Brer Rabbit just a-hollering, "Bow wow, bow wow, bow wow!"

Now, in them times, Brer Rabbit he have a long bushy tail. Brer Rabbit he mighty proud of his tail in the ole times.

Well, Brer Rabbit he do his best, and he just burn the wind through the woods; but Brer Dog he just gwine on the jump, "Bow wow, bow wow!"

Presently Brer Dog he see Brer Rabbit, and he think he got him; and Brer Dog he open his mouth and jump for Brer Rabbit, and Brer Dog he just bite Brer Rabbit's fine tail plum off.

That how come Brer Rabbit have such little no count tail these yer times; and Brer Dog he that mad with ole Brer Rabbit 'case he saw his mouth, when he run Brer Rabbit through the woods, he still holler, "Bow wow, bow wow!" and you take noticement how, when Brer Rabbit hear Brer Dog say that, Brer Rabbit he just pick up his foots and fly, 'case Brer Rabbit done disremember how he done saw Brer Dog's mouth.

E. M. B.

## 2. BRO' RABBIT AN' DE WATER-MILLIONS

Bro' Rabbit an' Bro' Coon dey go inter cohoot fuh ter plant dey crap tergedder an' fuh ter stan' by one annudder ef trubble cum erlong. One day dey wus wurkin' in dey water-million patch, en dey bofe see Colonel Tiger come er creepin' roun' de fence, lookin' hungry ernough fuh ter eat dem bofe. Bro' Coon he goes back on Bro' Rabbit,

en climb up er tree, an lefe he fren fuh ter face trubble by hesef. Bro' Rabbit carnt climb, an' he so scard dat he teef rattle; but he grab he spade an' meck haste an' dig two holes, an' bury two uf he biggest water-millions in dem, & kiver em wif yearth, an' pat dem smooove wid he spade: he wurk so hard dat by de time Colonel Tiger git ter de gate, he is dun got annudder hole dug most deep ernuf fuh one more.

Colonel Tiger stan' dar — in he fine stripe suit — watchin' him, an' he mity curious, Colonel Tiger am: *when he see dem two graves dar, an' Bro' Rabbit a-makin' one more, he done know what ter think.*

So finely he talk out, an' ax him. "Bro' Rabbit," he ax, "what's dat yo is doin' dar?" Bro' Rabbit he mity scared, but he hold he heart bold, an' he meck answer out loud an' brash like he wus mad. "*I is buryin' de folks what I is dun kilt,*" he say, slappin' de graves wid he spade. "Dat Bro' Lion, dat Bro' Bear; an' I'se got er Coon treed dar what I'se dun cungered, but I ain't kilt him yit. Who is you axin' me questions, anyhow? I ain't got time ter turn roun' ter look at yer; but yer is so brash, ef yer'll wait 'twell I gits fru, I'll cum out dar an' cunger yo' an' kill yo too, 'case I wants free more fools fuh ter finish out dis row."

Colonel Tiger wus dat scared, he jes burn de wind, gittin' erway frum dat dangus-talkin' man.

Atter he gone, Bro' Coon he cum down he tree, en meck er *great miration* ober Bro' Rabbit; but Bro' Rabbit he say, "I done want none er yer talk; yo ain't no true fren', en done keep ter de 'greemint, so I'se gwine ter vide de crap an' break up."

Bro' Coon he say, "How yo gwineter vide?" An' Bro' Rabbit he meck answer, en say, "You is de biggest Bro' Coon, so yo kin teck all dat yer kin tote erway. I is de littlest, so I'se got ter teck what is *lef behine.*" Bro' Coon kin jes lif *one leetle water-million* wif er rotten end; an' wid dat he hafter go — 'case Bro' Rabbit talk so big, he was scaid of him, ennyhow, en glad fuh ter git erway.

E. H. L.

### 3. BRO' FOX AN' DE FOOLISH JAY-BIRD

One day Bro' Fox bin eatin' sum Turkey, an' he git er bone stuck in he tooft (tooth) what meck it mighty hot, an' achey. Hit hurt so bad he carnt eat nuffin fur four days, so he go ter Mr. Jay-bird an' ax him fur ter pull de piece ob bone out. Mr. Jay-bird ergree fur ter pull hit out; but de Jay-bird wus mighty cute an' sceamy bird, he wus jealous uf Mr. Mockin'-bird, 'case he wus de finest singer, an' he hate him 'case he mock him. He meck er plan in he mine fur ter get Bro' Fox ter kill Mr. Mockin'-bird, an' all he fambly so he ergree fur ter pull out de piece ob bone; but he meck Bro' Fox wait er long

time fust, whilst he tell him how dangous hit wus ter chaw big bones; den when Bro' Fox git mighty impashunt, he hop on he jaw, an' peck de piece ob bone out he tooft. Bro' Fox mighty releabed.

"Dere Bro' Fox!" he say, "dat all right. Now I'se guyen ter gib yo' some good advice: you eat *leetle* bones atter dis. If yer has er mine ter, jest es soon es hit git dark, I'se guyen ter show yer whar Mr. Mockin'-bird an' he hole fambly roost, an' den yer kin cotch 'im, an' taste meat what am sweet."

An' wid dat he argufy 'bout how good bird-bones taste, 'twel Bro' Fox mouf jest water; den he ax, "Yer feels er heap better, doan yer, Bro' Fox?" an' Bro' Fox he say, sorter anxus-like, "I'se 'fraid yo' is dun lef er leetle piece ob dat bone in dar yit. I wish yo' wuld jest step in ergin an' look, Bro' Jay-bird."

Den, when Mr. Jay-bird hop on he jaw, fur ter look in he tooft, Bro' Fox snap he mouf too an' cotch him, an' meck remarkt, fru he teetf, "Yes, Mr. Jay-bird, I does feel er heap better; I feels so much better dat I is hongry, an' yer dun telt me so much erbout de fine flavor ob de leetle bones, dat I carnt wait twel night cum, fur ter try dem!"

An' wid dat he chaw him up, an' say de flavor were berry fine in-deedy.

*When yer ba'rgins wif er rascal fer ter harm yer frens, yo better meck shore yo' is in a safe place yosef erfore yer bergins ter meck yer ergreemint.*

E. H. L.

#### 4. WHEN BRER RABBIT HELP BRER TERAPIN

In the old days Brer Wolf he have a mighty grudge against Brer Terapin, Brer Wolf do; and one day Brer Wolf come up with old Brer Terapin in the woods; and he say, Brer Wolf do, how he just going to make a end of Old Brer Terapin.

But Brer Terapin he just draw in his foots and shut the door; and he draw in his arms and shut the door; and then if the old man don' bodaciously draw in his head and shut the door right in Brer Wolf's face.

That make ole Brer Wolf mighty angry, sure it naterly do; but he bound he ain' going to be outdone that er way, and he study 'bout how he going smash Brer Terapin's house in; but there ain' no rock there, and he feared to leave the ole man, 'case he know direckly he leave him the ole chap going open the doors of his house and tote hisself off.

Well, while Brer Wolf study 'bout it, here come Brer Rabbit; but he make like he don' see Brer Wolf, 'case they ain' the bestest of friends in them days, Brer Wolf and Brer Rabbit ain', no, that they ain'.

But Brer Wolf he call out, he do, "O Brer Rabbit, Brer Rabbit,

come here!" So Brer Rabbit he draw up, and he see Old Brer Terapin's house with the doors all shut; and he say, "Morning, Brer Terapin!" but Brer Terapin never crack his door; so Brer Wolf say, he do, "Brer Rabbit, you stay here and watch the ole man, while I go and fotch a rock to smash his house!" and Brer Wolf he take hisself off.

Directly Brer Wolf gone, ole Brer Terapin he open his door and peak out. Now, Brer Rabbit and Brer Tarapin was the best friends in the ole time; and Brer Rabbit, he say, he do, "Now, Brer Terapin, Brer Wolf done gone for to tote a rock to smash your house;" and Brer Terapin say he going move on.

Then Brer Rabbit know if Brer Wolf come back and find he let Brer Terapin make off with his house, Brer Wolf going fault hisself; and Brer Wolf are a strong man, and he are a bad man; and poor old Brer Rabbit he take his hindermost hand and he scratch his head, and clip off right smart. Brer Rabbit was a peart man them days.

Directly he come up with old Sis Cow, and he say, "Howdy, Sis Cow? Is you got a tick you could lend out to your friends?" and he take a tick and tote it back, and put it on the rock just where Brer Terapin was.

Presently here come Brer Wolf back, totin' a big rock; and he see Brer Rabbit just tearing his hair and fanning his hands, and crying, "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I'se feared of my power, I'se feared of my power!" but Brer Wolf he say, "Where old man Terapin gone with his house? I done told you to watch." But Brer Rabbit he only cry the more, and he say, "That what I done tell you, don't you see what my power done done? There all what left of poor ole Brer Terapin right there." And Brer Rabbit he look that sorrowful-like, he near 'bout broke down, and he point to the cow-tick.

But Brer Wolf he done live on the plantation with Brer Rabbit many a day; and Brer Wolf he say, "Quit your fooling, ole man. You done turn Brer Terapin loose, and I just going to use this yer rock to smash your head." Then Brer Rabbit he make haste to make out to Brer Wolf how that little chap surely are all what's left of poor old Brer Terapin.

And Brer Rabbit he make out how the power are in his left eye to make a big man perish away; and Brer Rabbit he 'low how he just happen to strike his left eye on his old friend Brer Terapin, and directly he get smaller and smaller, twell that all there be left of the poor old man. When Brer Rabbit say that, he turn and cut his left eye sharp at Brer Wolf, Brer Rabbit do.

Brer Wolf he just look once on the little tick, and he say, "Don' look at me, Brer Rabbit! Don' look at me!" and Brer Wolf he strike out, and he just burn the wind for the woods.

Then Brer Rabbit he clip it off down the road twell he come up with old Brer Terapin; and they strike a fire, and make a good pot of coffee, and talk it over.

E. M. B.

##### 5. WHEN BRER 'POSSUM ATTEND MISS FOX'S HOUSE-PARTY

Once long before the war, when times was good, Miss Fox she set out for to give a house-party, Miss Fox did.

And Miss Fox she 'low she ain' going invite the lastest person to her house-party 'cepting the quality; and when Brer Fox he just mention Brer 'Possum's name, Miss Fox she rare and charge, Miss Fox do. She give it to Brer Fox, and she 'low how she don' invite no poor white trash to her house-party; and she 'low, Miss Fox do, how Brer Fox must set his mind on giving a tacky party.

Brer Fox he 'low how Brer 'Possum ain' no poor white trash; but Miss Fox she 'clare Brer 'Possum ain' no more than a half-strainer, and so Miss Fox she don' invite Brer 'Possum to her house-party.

Well, Brer 'Possum he feel mighty broke up when he hear all the other creeters talking about the house-party, 'case Brer 'Possum he have plenty money. Brer 'Possum are a mighty shifty man, and always have plenty money.

Well, Brer 'Possum he tell Brer Rabbit how he feel 'bout Miss Fox house-party; and he ax Brer Rabbit, Brer 'Possum do, why he don' be invited.

Brer Rabbit he 'low it all because Brer 'Possum don' hold up his head and wear store clothes; and Brer Rabbit he advise Brer 'Possum to order hisself some real quality clothes, and a churn hat, and go to Miss Fox house-party; and he 'low, Brer Rabbit do, how they won't know Brer 'Possum, and mistake hisself sure for some man from the city.

So ole Brer 'Possum he got plenty money, and he go to the city, Brer 'Possum do; and he order just a quality suit of clothes, Brer 'Possum do; and he go to the barber, and get hisself shaved, and his hair cut, and he present hisself at Miss Fox house-party.

Well, you may be sure Brer 'Possum he receive flattering attention, he surely did; and the last one of the people asking, "Who that fine gentleman?" "Who that city gentleman?" "Who that stinguished-looking gentleman?" and Brer Rabbit he make hisself forward to introduce Brer 'Possum right and left, "My friend Mr. Potsum from Augusta!" That old Brer Rabbit he done say "Potsum," 'case enduring they find him out, that old Brer Rabbit he going swear and kiss the book he done say 'possum, all the time. That just exactly what that old man Rabbit going to do.

But, Lord bless you! they all that taken up with the fine gentleman,

they don' spicion hisself; and he pass a mighty proudful evening, Brer 'Possum do.

But when it come retiring-time, and the gentlemen all get their candles, and 'scorted to their rooms, Brer 'Possum he look at the white bed, and he look all 'bout the room, and he feel powerful uncomfortable, Brer 'Possum do, 'case Brer 'Possum he never sleep in a bed in all his born days. Brer 'Possum he just can't sleep in a bed.

The poor old man he walk round the room, and round the room, twell the house get asleep; and he take off all his fine clothes, and he open the door softly, and step out all to hisself, he powerful tired; and he just climb a tree what stand by the porch, and hang hisself off by his tail and fall asleep.

In the morning, when Miss Fox get up and open the door, she see Brer 'Possum hanging from the limb. She that astonished she can't believe her eyes; but Miss Fox know a fine fat 'possum when she see him, she surely do.

Well, Miss Fox she cotch hold of Brer 'Possum and kill him, and dress him, and serve him up on the breakfast-table; and the guests they compliment Miss Fox on her fine 'Possum breakfast; but when they go call the fine gentleman from the City, they just find his fine clothes, but they never suspicion where he done gone, twell many day after, when old Brer Rabbit he done let the secret out.

E. M. B.

#### 6. HOW BRER FOX DREAM HE EAT BRER 'POSSUM

In the old times Brer 'Possum he have a long, wide, bushy tail like Brer Fox. Well, one day Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox get a mighty honein' to set er tooth in some fresh meat, and they both start off for to find some, and directly they find Brer 'Possum up a black gum-tree.

Now, in them times Brer Rabbit he can climb well as any other of the creatures, 'case he has sharp claws like a cat; and he don't set down to nobody on climbing, Brer Rabbit don't. So when they find Brer 'Possum way up in the top of the gum-tree, Brer Rabbit he jest climb up after Brer 'Possum, Brer Rabbit do; and jest before he reach him, Brer 'Possum he wind his tail on the limb, an' hang wid he hade down, an' swing hisself out.

Brer Rabbit he standing on the limb; an' he reach out, and he grab Brer 'Possum's tail nigh the stump, Brer Rabbit do; and Brer 'Possum he swing hisself out, and try to reach another limb with he hand; and every time Brer 'Possum swing out, Brer Rabbit's hand slip a little on Brer 'Possum's tail; and next time Brer 'Possum swing and reach out, Brer Rabbit he hand slip a little more, twell Brer Rabbit he done skin the whole of Brer 'Possum's tail; an' Brer 'Possum fall



to the ground, where Brer Fox done wait for him, and Brer Fox done kotch him and kill him; but since that day Brer 'Possum he never have no hair on his tail. Then Brer Rabbit he come down, Brer Rabbit did, and they study how's der bestest and soonest way to cook Brer 'Possum, 'case dey both jes er droolin' for some fresh meat.

Brer Fox he say "he take Brer 'Possum home and cook him," and he invite Brer Rabbit to come and dine with him. Brer Rabbit agrees to that, so Brer Fox he takes Brer 'Possum home and he fly round to beat all, Brer Fox do; and he gets some nice fat bacon and yams, and he just cooks dat 'Possum up fine and brown.

Then Brer Fox he get mighty tired, and he say, "I 'clare, I plum too tired out to eat. I don't know if I better eat that 'Possum now, and go to sleep and dream about him, or whether I better go to sleep and dream about him first, and then wake up and eat him;" and he lay down on the bed to study a minute, and first thing Brer Fox knowed he fast asleep.

Directly here come Brer Rabbit, he knock on the door, but he ain't get no answer; but he smell dat 'Possum, and the bacon and the yams, and the sage, and he most 'stracted to set he tooth in it. He crack the door softly, and he find Brer Fox fast asleep on the bed, an' the nice dinner all smoking hot on the table.

Brer Rabbit he just draw up and set to, Brer Rabbit do. He eat one hind-leg; and it so fine, he say to hisself he bound ter try er fore-leg, and then Brer Rabbit 'low he bound ter try the other hind-leg.

Well, sar, dat old man Rabbit he set there and eat twell the lastest mouthful of that 'Possum done gone.

Then he just turn to wonderin', Brer Rabbit did, what Brer Fox gwine to say when he done wake up and find the bestest bits of that 'Possum gone.

Brer Rabbit he find hisself in er right delicate situation, and was disturbed, Brer Rabbit was; but he say to hisself he gwine fool Brer Fox; and Brer Rabbit he take all the bones, and he put them on the floor in a row round Brer Fox's head; and he take the marrow-grease, and he rub it softly on the whiskers round Brer Fox's mouth; then he go out softly and close the door, and put he eye to the key-hole.

Directly Brer Fox he yawn and stretch hisself and wake up; and couse his mind turn to that 'Possum, and he rise up; and shorely he most powerful astonished when he see the dish empty, and the bones all 'bout hisself on the floor.

Directly here come Brer Rabbit's knock. Brer Fox say, "Come in!" and Brer Rabbit say, "Brer Fox, I come for my share of that 'Possum." Brer Fox say, "Fore de Lord, Brer Rabbit, where that 'Possum gone?" and he fling he hand at the bones on the floor.

Brer Rabbit he snap he eye, like he most mighty got er way with;

and he say, "Brer Fox, I heard the creatures tell heap er powerful hard tales on yourself, but I 'clare, I never think you treat a friend dis yer way."

Then Brer Fox he swear and kiss the book he ain't set er tooth in that 'Possum. Then Brer Rabbit he look most mighty puzzled; and at last he say, "Brer Fox, I tell you what you done done, you just eat the lastest mouthful of that 'Possum in your sleep." Brer Fox he rare and charge, and swear he ain't "even got the taste of 'Possum in he mouth." Then Brer Rabbit he take Brer Fox to the glass, and make Brer Fox look at hissself; and he say, Brer Rabbit did, "Bre rFox, how come all that fresh marrow-grease on your whiskers?" and Brer Fox he look mighty set down on; and he say, "Well, all I 'low dat the most unsatisfying 'Possum I ever set er tooth in."

E. M. B.

#### 7. SUPERSTITION OF THE GRAVEYARD SNAKE AND RABBIT

Ain't I nebber tole yer 'bout dem grabeyard snakes? Bite? No, hit don't bite! Hit's black, most ginerelly, wid yaller splotches on he's back, an' he lib all de time in de Cemetterry, whar hit greab an' moan. Yer see, when de Debbel temp Eab, an got her an' Adam druv outen de garden ob Eden, he wus dat tickled ober hit, dat he laft, an' he laft, 'twel he split hesef in two. So de Sperit part ob him go roun' now, temptin' folks ter sin, an' he'pin' de Hoodoos. But de body part ob him wus turn by de Lord inter dem grabeyard snakes what libs in de grabeyards whar dey moans all de time ober de death what dey is brung inter dis world. En, honey, ef yer kin git de skin uv one uv dem snakes, an' put hit roun' yo waist, whar noboddy see hit, yer will conquer yo ennemys sho: ef yer greases yo hand wid de grease ob a grabeyard snake, an' steals things, nobody will see yer, an' yer won't git found out; 'case *Satan* is 'bleged ter stan' by folks what are greased wid he *own* grease. Hoodoo folks is mighty fond er eatin' snakes, 'case hit makes dem wise an' cute; but dey don't dar ter eat er grabeyard snake, 'case dey ud be eatin' de Debbel hesef, an' he couldn't he'p em no more. Dey am a heap ob tings dat snake-ile am good fer dat I is dun disrermembered; but I knows dis fer sarding: ef yo hates a pusson, an' yo makes dey image outen dat ile mix up wid flour er san', an' den names hit atter de pusson yo hates, an' bakes de image good by de open fire, yer kan meck dat pusson miser'ble, 'case yer got em snake Hoodoo'd, an dat's de wus kine ob Hoodoo. If yer stick pins in dat image, de pusson what yer dun name it atter 'ill hab pains an' misery in de same place on dem es whar de pins goes in de image. I once know'd a man what wus kilt clean dead 'case dey stick pins inter de image ov him, in de place whar he heart wus, do dat wus er mistook, yer see.

Grabeyard rabbits? Oh, yessum! Dem is de rabbits what de grabeyard snakes charm fer ter meck em stay dar, an' keep dem cumpany. Dey don't do no harm, an' dey left hine-foot 'ill bring good luck, shore; but ef yer want Satan ter cum right down an' foller yer, an' he'p yer in ebberry-ting, yo jes' git de button offen er grabeyard rattlesnake, an' sew hit up wid a piece ob silver in er leetle red flannel bag, en war hit on yo heart. Why, ef yer do dat way, an' seys er varse outen de Bible backards, at twelve er'clock on de crossroads, uf er moonlight night, de ole Nick 'ill cum walkin' up ter meet yer, mos' any time yer calls him. No, I ain't nebber tried hit myself, 'case de smell uf brimstone allers meck me narvous; an' I nebber would like ter be took dat er way, 'jes lik er 'oman.

E. H. L. and E. M. B.

#### 8. WHY MR. OWL CAN'T SING

When Mr. Owl was young, he could sing to beat all the birds in the woods. This ole man what you see flying about calling "whoo, whoo!" in the ole time he could sing so fine that he teach the singing-school.

In them days Mr. Owl he never wander round, like he do in these yer times, 'case he have a happy home, and he stay home with his wife and chillens, like a spectable man.

But that poor ole man done see a heap of trouble in he time, he shore has; and it all come along of that trifling no count Miss Cuckoo, what too sorry to build her nest fer herself, but go about laying her eggs in her neighbors' nests.

In the old time, Mr. and Miss Owl they belong to the quality; end they have a shore 'nuff quality house, not like these little houses what you see these yer times, what secondary people live in.

One night Miss Owl she go out to pay a visit, and she leave Mr. Owl at home to mind the chillens; but directly she gone, Mr. Owl he take he fiddle under he arm, and go off to he singing-school. Then that trifling no count Miss Cuckoo come sailing along calling "Cuckoo, cuckoo!" and she leave her eggs in Miss Owl's fine nest, and then she go sailing off, calling, "Cuckoo, cuckoo!"

Now, presently Miss Owl she come home; and when she find that egg in her nest, she rare end charge on the poor ole man to beat all; and she tell him she never live with him no more twell he tell her who lay that egg; but the poor ole man can't tell her, 'case he don't know hisself. But Miss Owl she be mighty proud-spirited; and what she done say, she done say.

So the ole man he leave he fine home, and he go wandering through the woods looking for the one what lay that egg and make all he

trouble. And the ole man he that sorrowful he can't sing no more, but jest go sailing 'bout, asking, "Whoo, whoo!" But Mr. Owl he never find out to this day who lay that egg, and so Miss Owl never live with him no more; but he keep on asking, "Whoo, whoo?" And now it done been that long, the poor ole man plum forgot how to sing, and he don't play he fiddle no more, and can't say nothing but "Whoo, whoo!"

E. M. B.

#### 9. THE NEGRO'S SUPERSTITION OF THE SPANISH MOSS

Long time ago there was a powerful wicked man. He was that sinful, that Death he don't have the heart to cut him off in his sins, 'cepten' he give him a warning. So one day Death he appear to the wicked man, and he tell him how that day week he gwine come for him. The wicked man he that frightened, he get on his knees and beg Death to let him live a little longer. The wicked man he take on, and he beg, 'twell Death he promise he won't come for him 'twell he give him one more warning.

Well, the years go by, but the wicked man he grow more wicked; and one day Death he appear to him again, and Death he tell the wicked man how that day week he gwine come for him; but the wicked man he more frightened than what he was before; and he get on his knees, the wicked man do, and beg Death to let him live a little longer; and Death he promise the wicked man how before he come for him he gwine send him a token what he can see or what he can hear.

Well, the years go by; and the wicked man he get a powerful old man, — he deaf and blind, and he jest drag hisself about. One day Death he done come for the wicked man once more, but the wicked man he say how Death done promise him he won't come for him twell he send him a token what he can see or hear; and Death he say he done send a token what he can see. Then the wicked man he say how he can't see no token, 'cause he say how he done blind. Then Death he say how he done send a token what he can hear. But the wicked man he say how he plum deaf, and he say how he can't hear no token; and he beg Death that hard to let him live, that Death he get plum outdone with the wicked man, and Death he jest go off and leave him to hisself. And the wicked man he jest wander about the woods, and his chillen all die, and his friends all die. Still he jest wander about the woods. He blind, and he can't see; and he deaf, and he can't hear. He that blind he can't see to find no food; and he that deaf he never know when anybody try to speak to him. And the wicked man he done perish away twell he jest a shaddow with long hair. His hair it grow longer and longer, and it blow in the wind;

and still he can't die, 'cause Death he done pass him by. So he here to wander and blow about in the woods, and he perish away twell all yo can see is his powerful long hair blowing all 'bout the trees; and his hair it done blow about the trees twell it done grow fast, and now yo all folks done calls it Spanish Moss.

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